TEMP BUDDY

Carlos missed his brother , Jason was his road dog, and companion. Jason, whom everyone called Jason J for short , had been gone for seven long months since the incident after work . A bad man named Charles had taken him. Charles was a scary man strange mysterious and most thought he was a made up story to hide the government crimes in the city. He drove a big white car, a Cadillac, and prowled the city streets like a hungry wolf looking for weak prey . No one knew where Charles kept Jason or if was dead or sold into enslavement .

Carlos felt a heavy weight in his heart every day a pressure to answer the call . He had to find Jason. He tried everything. He talked to the police, but they did not have any real clues. Jason and his mother Mrs. T worked into in unison to track down what happened.

One rainy Tuesday, Carlos had an idea. Jason was last seen getting into a car from the RideBuddy service, a rides sharing app that was developing around the city . Maybe, just maybe, a RideBuddy driver knew something. Carlos decided he would become a Ride Buddy driver too, at least pretend to be one . He needed to be close to the roads Charles used.

His friend, Kross, was short humorous and a bit fat, but he was loyal. Kross agreed to help.

"Carlos, this is crazy," Kross mumbled, adjusting his wrist watch. "You don't even know how to find your way around the city that well."

"I have to try, Kross. I mean how hard could it be bro, it's just picking up strange people and dropping them off using gps dog, even Stevie wonder can see that." it's For Jason," Carlos said firmly.

Carlos quickly signed up for the Ride Buddy app. He learned the ropes fast. He drove the night shifts, hoping to spot the menacing white Cadillac. Kross used his small apartment as a base, monitoring police reports and online chatter about strange disappearances. For a long time they didn't see anything, nothing, nada zilch.

The first few weeks were slow. Carlos picked up strange passengers. He listened to every conversation. He saw many cars, but not the Cadillac. The city felt cold and full of shadows. Good tips and many long stories.

One night, about two months into his new job, Carlos got a ping late near the old industrial docks. His passenger was a nervous young woman named Meeka . She kept looking over her shoulder. She seemed like a druggie or something or at least a little crazy, gittery or just plain sketchy, he kept a solid eye on her while driving.

"Where to?" Carlos asked gently. Turning down his Jay-z tracks on the radio.

"Just... the old shipping area, near Pier Seven," Meeka whispered. "Hurry, please." she kept grabbing her back and looking at the time on her phone, she was shaky nervous and distracting to say the least.

As Carlos drove, Meeka started talking, her voice trembling. "I saw him. Charles!" He forces people to drive for him, secret rides. I was almost one of them, months ago, but I ran."

Carlos's heart hammered. "The white Cadillac?"

Meeka nodded, tears welling up. "Yes. He takes them to a hidden place. It's not a house. It's like a private garage, deep inside one of those abandoned warehouse complexes near the river bend. He keeps them there." It was almost like she was psychic , she knew what he wanted to hear, or was she heaven sent his prayers had been answered.

This was the first real lead, a solid location. Carlos dropped Meeka who paid totally in change, quarters nickels and pennies, off safely, promising to be careful. He immediately called Kross.

"Kross, Pier Seven area. An old warehouse complex. Meeka gave me the details. We need to check it out tomorrow night." "you want be forcing people to disappear anymore charles," he thought to himself.

Kross was quiet for a moment. "Be careful, Carlos. That area is deserted and dangerous, even in the daylight, I heard a lot shady stuff about that spot down there ."

The next night, under a thick, moonless sky, Carlos and Kross drove to the docks in Carlos's beat-up sedan. They parked far away and walked toward the ruins. The air smelled of salt and decay. They located a cluster of warehouses that looked slightly newer than the others. Still with there badges and uniform on they found the temp-to hire warehouse.

Using Kross's small, powerful flashlight, they examined the perimeter. Most windows were broken or boarded up. Then, behind the largest building, they found something odd: a thick, reinforced steel door, newer than the rest of the structure, with a modern keypad lock with ride buddy training services logo on the lock.

"A private unit," Kross breathed. "This must be it! Charles is hiding his captives here."

Carlos felt a surge of desperate energy. He pulled out a lock-picking kit Kross insisted he carry.

"Stand guard, Kross . If you see anything, run and call for help, no matter what."

Kross gripped a heavy wrench he had brought. "Go."

Carlos worked on the keypad. His fingers shook, but the image of Jason kept him steady. After what felt like an hour, a soft click echoed. The heavy door groaned open just enough for a man to slip through.

The inside was dark, silent, and unnervingly clean. It smelled strongly of bleach and something metallic. They moved down a short, concrete corridor. They heard a low, rhythmic humming sound.

They reached another door, this one marked with a faint, old stencil: 'UNIT 4B'. Carlos pushed it open.

They heard someone coming. They opened up a utility closet and rushed in. silently they hid unable to move hoping not to make a noise.

“wow this is a lot bro, you sure the police couldn't have handled this joint, you should of just called them’ “man chill we doing fine ,” Carlos demanded both whispering and sweating in the small hot mop closet.

peeping out the crack of the door Carlos could see them gathering around staring at a training tape but they looked strange, like they were in a trance , it didn't look like they were normal people they were dirty tired looking and look they were there against there will. He then notice something really strange two or them began to fight at the refreshment table and began biting each other like wild animals, their eyes glowed yellow as blood and foam dripped from their mouths, “what in the h-ll kind of training center was this!” “wow, blood mouth dude must be real hungry” Kross said chuckling lowly, “I'm serious he took a bite out of dude like he was a french subway sandwich” eventually the room cleared out and they decided to run . they were now back outside. Carlos took out a gas can , “what are you doing?” “i’m burning it down” “what?” “yeah, their monsters im sure of it my boy, like from hell monsters, no joke” “you sure?” “1000 percent”

carlos said with a devilish look in his eyes. Kross boarded the front and back door and they began to pound on it. Eventually they began pounding on the windows and they could see them begging for their lives, “let us out, what are doing” “maybe we are murdering innocent people C, man you sure about this?” “man they are night buddy drivers, demons bro don't fall for it” eventually the woman on the window began to burn bad. they stepped back in horror as the window cracked in scorching heat and the garage like building went up in flames and smoke. “she screamed and cried helplessness kross looked away confused, and then the truth came out , she began laughing as she burned , skinned mutilated and eyes fried she just started cackling , her grin was something horrible as if the the flames didnt matter she was already dead , they wore a human disguise some of the drivers , they were a creation of charles, they too wanted to come back from the dead and terrorize the living, after laughing psychotically she dropped dead her ride buddy shirt engulfed in flames.

Carlos grabbed two of the full gasoline cans. He doused the wooden frame of the door and the piles of rags near the center of the room. Kross ran back in, having seen the headlights sweep across the warehouse entrance.

"He’s parking! He’s getting out!" Kross screamed.

Carlos struck a match. The flame leaped to the gasoline. The room instantly roared to life with terrifying speed. The fire caught the metal bars, making them glow red.

"Let's go!" Carlos dragged Kross toward the steel door.

They burst out just as the main entrance door of the warehouse slammed open.

Carlos and Kross ran back toward their car, the heat scorching their backs. They jumped in, and Carlos slammed the accelerator. As they sped away, they looked back. Towering flames swallowed the old warehouse, destroying the prison and, hopefully, taking Charles's secret, and maybe even Charles himself, with it. They had not saved Jason yet, but they had destroyed the gathering center . The fight, Carlos knew, was far from over.